

sting of his conscience. How happy he had been with her! The thought of it was enough to draw a tear from his eye. He could not but feel that he was doing her a great wrong. Her unselfish love, which was ever eloquent in her eyes—eloquent equally in everything she did or said, he remembered. He could feel that what he was going to leave he could nowhere have again. He thought he would go back to her and tell her that he would soon return and that he was ashamed of his unjust behaviour to her and was sorry. But he lacked the moral

courage to go back to her and say it. So he thought he must go now, for he was not going to leave her for good, and could come back whenever he liked. Thus thinking he mounted his horse which was just then brought in saddled, and was soon off. In a minute he dismissed all painful thoughts from his mind, and as he rode on he found himself thinking of Rohini whose beautiful face floated before his mind's eye.

End of Part I

(To be continued)

TRANSLATED BY D. C. ROY

## THE LOST JEWELS

BY SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE

**M**y boat was moored beside an old bathing ghat of the river, almost in ruins. The sun had set.

On the roof of the boat the boatmen were at their evening prayer. Against the bright background of the Western sky their silent worship stood out like a picture. The waning light was reflected on the still surface of the river in every delicate shade of colour from gold to steel blue.

A huge house with broken windows, tumble-down verandahs and all the appearance of old age was in front of me. I sat alone on the steps of the ghat which were cracked by the far reaching roots of a banyan tree. A feeling of sadness began to come over me, when suddenly I was startled to hear a voice asking:

"Sir, where have you come from?"

I looked up and saw a man who seemed half-starved and out of fortune. His face had a disipated look such as is common among my countrymen who take up service away from home. His dirty coat of Assam silk was greasy and open at the front. He appeared to be just returning from his day's work and to be taking a walk by the side of the river at a time when he should have been taking his evening meal.

The new comer took his seat beside me on the steps. I said in answer to his question:

"I come from Ranchi."

"What occupation?"

"I am a merchant."

"What sort?"

"A dealer in cocoons and timber."

"What name?"

After a moment's hesitation I gave a name but it was not my own.

Still the stranger's curiosity was not satisfied. Again he questioned me:

"What have you come here for?"

I replied:

"For a change of air."

My cross-examiner seemed a little astonished. He said:

"Well, sir, I have been enjoying the air of this place for nearly six years and with it I have taken a daily average of fifty grains of quinine, but I have not noticed that I have benefited much."

I replied:

"Still you must acknowledge that, after Ranchi, I shall find the air of this place sufficient of a change."

"Yes indeed," said he. "More than you bargain for. But where will you stay here?"

Pointing to the tumble-down house above the ghat, I said:

"There."

I think my friend had a suspicion that I had come in search of hidden treasure. However he did not pursue the subject.

He only began to describe to me what had happened in this ruined building some fifteen years before

I found that he was the schoolmaster of the place. From beneath an enormous bald head his two eyes shone out from their sockets with an unnatural brightness in a face that was thin with hunger and illness.

The boatmen having finished their evening prayer turned their attention to their cooking. As the last light of the day faded the dark and empty house stood silent and ghostly above the deserted ghat.

The schoolmaster said

Nearly ten years ago when I came to this place Bhusan Saha used to live in this house. He was the heir to the large property and business of his uncle Durga Saha who was childless.

But he was modernised. He had been educated and not only spoke faultless English but actually entered Sahibs' offices with his shoes on. In addition to that he grew a beard, thus he had not the least chance of bettering himself so far as the sahibs were concerned. You had only to look at him to see that he was a modernised Bengali.

In his own home too he had another drawback. His wife was beautiful. With his College education on the one hand and on the other his beautiful wife, what chance was there of his preserving our good old traditions in his home?

Sir, you are certainly a married man so that it is hardly necessary to tell you that the ordinary female is fond of sour green mangoes, hot chillies and a stern husband. A man need not necessarily be ugly or poor to be cheated of his wife's love, but he is sure to be too gentle.

If you ask me why this is so, I have much to say on this subject for I have thought a good deal about it. A stag chooses a hardwood tree on which to sharpen its horns and would get no pleasure in rubbing them against a banana tree. From the very moment that man and woman become separate sexes, woman has been exercising all her faculties in trying by various devices to fascinate and bring man under her control. The wife of a man who is of his own accord submissive is altogether out of employment. All those weapons which she has inherited from her grandmothers of the untold

centuries are useless in her hands, the force of her tears, the fire of her anger and the snare of her glances lie idle.

Under the spell of modern civilisation man has lost the God-given power of his barbaric nature and this has loosened the conjugal ties. The unfortunate Bhusan had been turned out of the machine of modern civilisation an absolutely faultless man. He was therefore neither successful in business nor in his own home.

Mani was Bhusan's wife. She used to get her caresses without asking, her Dacca muslin saris without tears and her bangles without being able to pride herself on a victory. In this way her woman's nature became atrophied and with it her love for her husband. She simply accepted things without giving anything in return. Her harmless and foolish husband used to imagine that to give is the way to get. The fact was just the contrary.

The result of this was that Mani looked upon her husband as a mere machine for turning out her Dacca muslins and her bangles—so perfect a machine indeed that never for a single day did she need to oil its wheels.

Bhusan's wife did not talk very much nor did she mix much with her neighbours. To feed Brahmans in obedience to a sacred vow or to give a few pice to a religious mendicant was not her way. In her hands nothing was ever lost, whatever she got she saved up most carefully with the one exception of the memory of her husband's caresses. The extraordinary thing was that she did not seem to lose the least atom of her youthful beauty. People said that whatever her age was she never looked older than sixteen. I suppose youth is best preserved with the aid of the heart that is an ice chest.

But as far as work was concerned Manimalika was very efficient. She never kept more servants than were absolutely necessary. She thought that to pay wages to anyone to do work which she herself could do was like playing the pickpocket with her own money.

Not being anxious about anyone, never being distracted by love, always working and saving, she was never sick nor sorry.

For the majority of husbands this is quite sufficient, not only sufficient but fortunate. For the loving wife is a wife who makes it difficult for her husband to forget her and the fatigue of perpetual



remembrance wears out life's bloom. It is only when a man has lumbago that he becomes conscious of his waist. And lumbago, in domestic affairs, is to be made conscious, by the constant imposition of love, that you have such a thing as a wife. Excessive devotion to her husband may be a merit for the wife, but not comfortable for the husband,—that is my candid opinion.

I hope I am not tiring you, Sir? I live alone, you see, I am banished from the company of my wife and there are many important social questions which I have leisure to think about but cannot discuss with my pupils. In course of conversation you will see how deeply I have thought of them.

Just as he was speaking some jackals began to howl from a neighbouring thicket. The schoolmaster stopped for a moment the torrent of his talk. When the sound had ceased and the earth and the water relapsed into a deeper silence he opened his glowing eyes wide in the darkness of the night and resumed the thread of his story.

'Suddenly a tangle occurred in Bhusan's complicated business. What exactly happened it is not possible for a layman like myself either to understand or to explain. Suffice it to say that, for some sudden reason he found it difficult to get credit in the market. If only he could, by hook or by crook, raise a lakh and a half of rupees and only for a few days rapidly flash it before the market, then his credit would be restored and he would be able to sail far again.

So he began to cast about to see whether he could not raise a loan. But, in that case, he would be bound to give some satisfactory security, and the best security of all is jewelry.

So Bhusan went to his wife. But unfortunately he was not able to face his wife as easily as most men are. His love for her was of that kind which has to tread very carefully, and cannot speak out plainly what is in the mind, it is like the attraction of the sun for the earth, which is strong yet leaves immense space between them.

Still even the hero of a high class romance does sometimes when hard pressed have to mention to his beloved such things as mortgage deeds and promissory

notes. But words stick, and the tune does not seem right, and shrinking of reluctance makes itself felt. The unfortunate Bhusan was totally powerless to say, "Look here, I am in need of money, bring out your jewels."

He did broach the subject to his wife at last, but with such extreme delicacy, that it only titilated her opposition without bending it to his own purpose. When Mani set her face hard and said nothing, he was deeply hurt, yet he was incapable of returning the hurt back to her. The reason was that he had not even a trace of that barbarity, which is the gift of the male. If anyone had upbraided him for this, then most probably he would have expressed some such subtle sentiment as the following—

'If my wife, of her own free choice is unwilling to trust me with her jewelry, then I have no right to take them from her by force.'

What I say is has God given to man such ferocity and strength only for him to spend his time in delicate measurement of fine spun ideals?

However that may be, Bhusan, being too proud to touch his wife's jewels, went to Calcutta to try some other way of raising the money.

As a general rule in this world the wife knows the husband far better than the husband ever knows the wife, but extremely modern men in their subtlety of nature are altogether beyond the range of those unsophisticated instincts which woman-kind has acquired through ages. These men are a new race, and have become as mysterious as women themselves. Ordinary men can be divided roughly into three main classes, some of them are barbarians, some are fools and some are blind, but these modern men do not fit into any of them.

So Mani called her counsellor for consultation. Some cousin of hers was engaged as assistant steward on Bhusan's estate. He was not the kind of man to profit himself by dint of hard work, but by help of his position in the family he was able to save his salary, and even a little more.

Mani called him and told him what had happened. She ended up by asking him, 'Now what is your advice?'

He shook his head wisely and said, 'I don't like the look of things at all.' The

fact is that wise men never like the look of things

Then he added 'Babu will never be able to raise the money, and in the end he will have to fall back upon that jewelry of yours'

From what she knew of human nature she thought that this was not only possible, but likely. Her anxiety became keener than ever. She had no child to love, and though she had a husband, she was scarcely able to realise his very existence. So her blood froze at the very thought that her only object of love—the wealth which like a child had grown from year to year,—was to be in a moment thrown into the bottomless abyss of trade. She gasped 'What then is to be done?'

Modhu said 'Why not take your jewels and go to your father's house?' In his heart of hearts he entertained the hope that a portion, and possibly the larger portion, of that jewelry would fall to his lot.

Mani at once agreed. It was a rainy night towards the end of summer. At this very hour a boat was moored. Mani wrapped from head to foot in a thick shawl, stepped into the boat. The frogs croaked in the thick darkness of the cloudy dawn. Modhu, waking up from sleep, roused himself from the boat and said 'Give me the box of jewels.'

Mani replied 'Not now, afterwards. Now let us start.'

The boat started, and floated swiftly down the current. Mani had spent the whole night in covering every part of her body with her ornaments. She was afraid that if she put her jewels into a box they might be snatched away from her hands. But if she wore them on her person then no one could take them away without murdering her. Manimalika did not understand Bhusan, it is true, but there was no doubt about her understanding of Modhu.

Modhu had written a letter to the chief steward to the effect that he had started to take his mistress to her father's house. The steward was an ancient retainer of Bhusan's father. He was furiously angry, and wrote a lengthy epistle full of misspellings to his master. Although the letter was weak in its grammar, yet it was forcible in its language and clearly expressed the writer's disapproval of giving too much indulgence to womankind. Bhusan

on receiving it understood what was the motive of Mani's secret departure. What hurt him most was the fact that, in spite of his having given way to the unwillingness of his wife to part with her jewels, in this time of his desperate straits, his wife should still suspect him.

When he ought to have been angry Bhusan was only distressed. God has so arranged it, that man, for the most trifling reason, will burst forth in anger like a forest fire, and woman will burst into tears like a rain cloud for no reason at all. But the weather cycle seems to have changed, and this appears no longer to hold good.

The husband bent his head and said to himself 'Well, if this is your judgment, let it be so, I will simply do my own duty.' Bhusan, who ought to have been born five or six centuries hence, when the world will be moved by psychic forces, was unfortunate enough not only to be born in the nineteenth century, but also to marry a woman who belonged to that eternal primitive age which persists through all time. He did not write a word on the subject to his wife, and determined in his mind that he would never mention it to her again. What an awful penalty!

Ten or twelve days later, having secured the necessary loan Bhusan returned to his home. He imagined that Mani, after completing her mission, had by this time come back from her father's house. And so he approached the door of the inner apartments, wondering whether his wife would show any signs of shame or penitence for her undeserved suspicion.

He found the door shut. Breaking the lock, he entered the room and saw that it was empty.

At first Bhusan did not trouble about his wife's absence. He thought that if she wanted to come back she would do so. His old steward however came to him and said 'What good will come of taking no notice of it? You ought to get some news of the mistress.' Acting on this suggestion messengers were sent to Mani's father's house. The news was brought that up to that time neither Mani nor Modhu had turned up there.

Then a search began in every direction. Men went along both banks of the river making enquiries. The police were given a description of Modhu, but all in vain. They were unable to find out what boat



they had taken what boatman they had hired or by what way they had gone.

One evening when all hope had been abandoned of ever finding his wife Bhusan entered his deserted bed room. It was the festival of Krishna's birth and it had been raining incessantly from early morning. In celebration of the festival there was a fair going on in the village and in a temporary building a theatrical performance was being held. The sound of distant singing could be heard mingling with the sound of pouring rain. Bhusan was sitting alone in the darkness at the window there which hangs loose upon its hinges. He took no notice of the damp wind the spray of the rain and the sound of the singing. On the wall of the room were hanging a couple of pictures of the goddesses Lakshmi and Saraswati printed at the Art Studio on the clothes rack a towel and a bodice and a pair of saris were laid out ready for use. On a table in one corner of the room there was a box containing betel leaves, a small bowl of his own hand but now quite empty by Mani's hand. In a cupboard were arranged with all sorts of things were arranged with evident care—scent bottles decanters hoods, glass a sumptuous pack of cards large brightly polished shells and even empty soap boxes. In a niche there was a favourite little lamp with its round globe. Mani had been in the habit of lighting it with her own hands every evening. One who goes away leaving everything empty leaves the imprint of a living heart even on lifeless objects.

In the dead of night when the heavy rain had ceased and the songs of the village opera troupe had become silent Bhusan was sitting in the same position as before. Outside the window there was such an impenetrable darkness that it seemed to him as if the very gates of oblivion were before him reaching to the sky—as if he had only to cry out to be able to recover sight of those things which seemed to have been lost for ever.

Just as he was thinking thus the jingling sound as of ornaments was heard. It seemed to be advancing up the steps of the ghat. The water of the river and the darkness of the night were indistinguishable. Thrilling with excitement Bhusan tried to pierce and push through the darkness with his eager eyes—till they ached

but he could see nothing. The more anxious he was to see the denser the darkness became and the more shadowy the outer world.

The sound reached the top step of the bathing ghat and now began to come towards the house. It stopped in front of the door which had been locked by the porter before he went to the fair. Then upon that closed door there fell a rain of jingling blows as if with some ornaments. Bhusan was not able to sit still another moment but making his way through the unlighted rooms and down the dark staircase he stood before the closed door. It was padlocked from the outside so he began to shake it with all his might. The force with which he shook the door and the sound which he made woke him suddenly. He found he had been asleep and in his sleep he had made his way down to the door of the house. His whole body was wet with perspiration his hands and feet were icy cold and his heart was fluttering like a lamp just about to go out. His dream broken he realised that there was no sound outside except the pattering of the rain.

Although the whole thing was a dream Bhusan felt as if for some very small obstacle he had been cheated of the wonderful realisation of his impossible hope. The incessant patter of the rain seemed to say to—This awakening is a dream. This world is vain.

The festival was continued on the following day and the doorkeeper again had leave. Bhusan gave orders that the hall door was to be left open all night.

That night having extinguished the light Bhusan took his seat at the open window of his bedroom as before. The sky was dark with rain clouds and there was a silence as of something indefinite and impending. The monotonous croaking of the frogs and the sound of the distant songs were not able to break that silence, but only seemed to add an incongruity to it.

Late at night the frogs and the crickets and the boys of the opera party became silent and a still deeper darkness fell upon the night. It seemed that now the time had come.

Just as on the night before a clattering and jingling sound came from the ghat by the river. But this time Bhusan did not look in that direction lest by his over

anxiety and restlessness, his power of sight and hearing should become overwhelmed. He made a supreme effort to control himself, and sat still.

The sound of the ornaments gradually advanced from the ghat and entered the open door. Then it came winding up the spiral staircase which led to the inner apartments. It became difficult for Bhusan to control himself, his heart began to thump wildly and his throat was choking with suppressed excitement. Having reached the head of the spiral stairs the sound came slowly along the verandah towards the door of the room, where it stopped outside with a clanking sound. It was now only just on the other side of the threshold.

Bhusan could contain himself no longer, and his pent up excitement burst forth in one wild cry of, 'Mani', and he sprang up from his chair with lightning rapidity. Thus startled out of his sleep he found that the very window panes were rattling with the vibration of his cry. And outside he could hear the croaking of the frogs and patter of rain.

Bhusan struck his forehead in despair.

Next day the fair broke up, and the stallkeepers and the players' party went away. Bhusan gave orders that no one should sleep in the house that night except himself.

In the evening he took his seat at the window of the empty house. That night there were breaks in the clouds, showing the stars twinkling through the rain washed air. The moon was late in rising, and as the fair was over there was not a single boat on the flooded river. The villagers, tired out by two nights' dissipation, were sound asleep.

Bhusan, sitting with his head resting on the back of his chair, was gazing up at the stars.

As he watched them they one by one disappeared. From the sky above and from the earth beneath screens of darkness met like tired eyelids upon weary eyes. To-night Bhusan's mind was full of peace. He felt certain that the moment had come when his heart's desire would be fulfilled, and that Death would reveal his mysteries to his devotee.

The sound came from the river ghat just as on the previous nights, and advanced up the steps. Bhusan closed his eyes and sat in deep meditation. The

sound reached the empty hall. It came winding up the spiral stairs. Then it crossed the long verandah, and paused for a long while at the bedroom door.

Bhusan's heart beat fast, his whole body trembled. But this time he did not open his eyes. The sound crossed the threshold. It entered the room. Then it went slowly round the room stopping before the rack where the clothes were hanging, the niche with its little lamp, the table where the dried betel-leaves were lying, the almirah with its various nicknacks, and last of all it came and stood close to Bhusan himself.

Bhusan opened his eyes. He saw by the faint light of the crescent moon that there was a skeleton standing right in front of his chair. It had rings on all its fingers, bracelets on its wrists and armlets on its arms, necklaces on its neck, and a golden tiara on its head—its whole body glittered and sparkled with gold and diamonds. The ornaments hung loosely on the limbs but did not fall off. Most dreadful of all was the fact that the two eyes, which shone out from the bony face, were living,—two dark moist eyeballs looking out with a fixed and steady stare from between the long thick eyelashes. As he looked, his blood froze in its veins. He tried hard to close his eyes but could not, they remained open staring like those of a dead man.

Then the skeleton, fixing its gaze upon the face of the motionless Bhusan, silently beckoned with its outstretched hand, the diamond rings on its bony fingers glittering in the pale moonlight.

Bhusan stood up as one who had lost his senses, and followed the skeleton which left the room, its bones and ornaments rattling with a hollow sound. The verandah was crossed. Winding down the pitch dark spiral staircase, the bottom of the stairs was reached. Crossing the lower verandah, they entered the empty lampless hall. Passing through it, they came out on to the brick paved path of the garden. The bricks crunched under the tread of the bony feet. The faint moonlight struggled through the thick network of branches and the path was difficult to discern. Making their way through the flitting fireflies, which haunted the dark shadowy path, they reached the river.

By those very steps, up which the skeleton had come, the jewelled skeleton went.



step by step, with a stiff gait and hard sound. On the swift current of the river, flooded by the heavy rain, a faint streak of moon light was visible.

The skeleton descended to the river, and Bhutan, following it, placed one foot in the water. The moment he touched the water, he woke with a start. His guide was no longer to be seen. Only the trees, on the opposite bank of the river, were standing still and silent, and overhead the half moon was staring as if astonished. Starting from head to foot Bhutan slipped and fell headlong into the river. From the midst of dreams he had stepped, for a moment only, into the borderland of waking life,—the next moment to be plunged into eternal sleep."

Having finished his story the schoolmaster was silent for a little. Suddenly, the moment he stopped, I realised that

except for him the whole world had become silent and still. For a long time I also remained speechless, and in the darkness he was unable to see from my face what was its expression.

At last he asked me, "Don't you believe this story?"

I asked, "Do you?"

He said, "No,—and I can give you one or two reasons why. In the first place Dame Nature does not write novels, she has enough to do without all that."

I interrupted him and said, "And, in the second place, my name happens to be Bhutan Shah." "

The schoolmaster, without the least sign of shame, said, "I guessed as much. And what was your wife's name?"

I answered, "Nitya Kali."

Translated by  
W. W. PEARSON

(Reflections suggested by a monograph by Mr P. K. Wattal M.A. on The Population Problem of India, Bennet, Coleman & Co., Bombay)

By DR S. S. NEHRU, I.C.S.

**T**HE sore need for man power, or Human Capital is not a sequel to the present day perturbations, but an economic phenomenon persisting from generation to generation and strikingly manifest in a very modern form.

The Population problem in the East, and the Depopulation problem in the West are not two diametrically opposed propositions but two peculiar aspects of one and the same root question which goes deeper than Malthusianism, Neo-Malthusianism, Eugenism, or other Reform movements—surface-effects all—shakes to the rock bottom all the stratifications of accepted society.

The question turns upon the Conservation of society.

The principle of Conservation is the counter pole to the principle of Preservation or of purely active or passive defence. This second principle has by now, secured uncontested recognition, even under the most adverse conditions—where the Individual Unit, through heredity, tradition and training, would normally have chafed against the unresisted enforcement of this or of any principle. But the Individual Unit emerges from Egoism accepts the Collective Cause, and welcomes conscription in advocacy of that Cause.

The second principle of Conservation is reached by the same chain of reasoning. If Man power is conscribed in the interests of the Defence of Society why should not all the human capital be equally

conscribed in the interests of the Perpetuation of that Society? If it is a duty to defend the Country of the Present, it is a still higher duty to defend the Country of the Future. If want of preservation is a crime, want of perpetuation is a sin, &c.

Such, and many more, in varying language, are the variants on the same central theme.

It is precisely from the view point of the future country as against the present-country—of the people that is as against the people that shall be—that the problems of population and of depopulation sink their proper places and admit of a study in the right perspective—the perspective namely of two homologous aspects of a much larger issue.

This fusion of aspects is not fortuitous but corresponds to the bipolarity of the subject. Where there is a population problem, there is also a depopulation problem; and inversely. The two can be enunciated in terms of a common factor—

The population problem is briefly this

LARGE FAMILIES ARE AN EVIL.

They continually drift down the scale of comfort. They tend towards the margin of subsistence.

They pass beyond that margin into the region of Elimination through pauperism, starvation, disease and death.

The depopulation-problem, in the same... runs